

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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22

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

PC-01 IO-13 ACDA-07 /093 W

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R 030655Z AUG 76

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4076

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0610

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: EVENTS IN ERITREA: MOVEMENT, BUT NO DISCERNABLE DIRECTION

REF: ASMARA 0602 (DTG 301130Z JUL 76)

1. AFTER BEING THE CAUSE OF AN ABORTIVE FOUR-HOUR WAIT BY ASMARA'S ASSEMBLED DIGNITARIES AT THE AIRPORT ON JULY 31, COL. FIKRU, THE NEWLY-APPOINTED CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR OF ERITREA, ARRIVED IN ASMARA WITHOUT FANFARE ON AUGUST 1. WHILE WE ARE INCLINED TO ACCEPT THAT FIKRU'S EAL FLIGHT ON THE 31ST WAS WAVED OFF BECAUSE OF ADVERSE WEATHER, WE WERE SURPRISED BY THE LACK OF CEREMONY ATTENDING HIS ACTUAL ARRIVAL THE FOLLOWING DAY. IT IS, OF COURSE, TOO EARLY TO DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF HIS PRESENCE IN ASMARA ON THE REPORTED DISAFFECTION AMONG THE ETHIOPIAN OFFICERS AND MEN.

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ALL ACTIVITY APPEARS NORMAL, ALTHOUGH RADIO ASMARA REMAINS

INOPERATIVE.

2. ON THE EVENING OF JULY 29, A FORCE OF ELF ATTACKED A MICROWAVE TRANSMISSION STATION 20 KM. SOUTH OF ASMARA AT SALADARO. THE DEFENDERS, COMMANDO POLICE, SUCCESSFULLY REPELLED THE ASSAULT INFLECTING SOME 15 KILLED ON THE INSURGENTS. THE DEFENDERS' SUCCESS IS EXPLAINED BY ERITREANS BY THE POLICE USE OF THE RUSE OF A BOGUS SURRENDER AND THEN SLAUGHTERING THE EXPOSED INSURGENTS, WHO WERE ALLEGED TO BE UNTRIED RECRUITS FROM THE TESSENNEY AREA. ALSO RAPID REACTION BY 2ND DIV. RELIEF FORCES FROM ASMARA, SAPPED THE SPIRIT OF THE ATTACKERS. IF THERE IS SUBSTANCE TO THE SUPPOSITION THAT THE THREE WEEKS SINCE GETACHEW'S DEATH HAVE WITNESSED A TACIT TRUCE BETWEEN INSURGENTS AND EPMG FORCES, THIS INCIDENT, INITIATED BY THE REBELS, CONSTITUTES THE FIRST BREACH OF THAT TRUCE.

3. THERE ARE REPORTS THAT SOLOMON TEKLE AND SELECT MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF ERITREAN ELDERS LEFT ASMARA LATE LAST WEEK TO TRAVEL TO ASSAB TO MEET WITH AFAR AND DANAKIL DISSIDENTS. THIS DELEGATION, WHICH HAS MET IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ELF AND PLF, IS EXPECTED TO ELICIT THE VIEWS OF AFARS AND THEIR CO-RELIGIONIST KIN THE DANAKILS, THE PREPONDERANCE OF BOTH GROUPS BEING WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE ERITREAN REGION.

4. TESTS FOR CONTAMINATION OF THE MUNICIPAL WATER SUPPLY HAVE APPARENTLY PROVED NEGATIVE AND WATER IS AGAIN BEING DISTRIBUTED TO THE CITY AND PUMPED FROM THE ABARDA RESERVOIR (REFTEL).
SLUTZ

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